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ABSTRACT

In the Philippines, introduction of a formal education system, new written language, and the knowledge encoded in it have been part of a colonization process and not the result of direct evolution from informal education. The discontinuities between formal and informal education--abstraction, systematization, and specialization--are greater and more complex, but nonformal education is in a position to bridge them. Adult education development has been part of a dynamic interaction between social problems, popular demands, state response, adult education provision, and external constraints. The most significant legislation and policies are as follows: the agrarian reform law, creation of autonomous regions for indigenous Muslim Filipino communities, local government code, education reforms, language policy, literacy under Education for All, human rights education, and Philippine Development Plan for Women. Seven aspects must be considered when speaking of a context-specific, community-based literacy and functional nonformal education program: nature of community life, extent of literacy practice within the community, use of locally adapted and indigenous materials, development of a literate tradition in communities, incorporation of livelihood and development components in literacy programs, use of the interagency approach, and a system of equivalency and accreditation and a new role for the Bureau of Nonformal Education. The present nonformal education program is determined to put in place an alternative learning system that includes these seven aspects. (YLB)

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A Research and Development Approach to the Delivery of Comprehensive Functional Education and Literacy in the Philippines

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A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT APPROACH
TO THE DELIVERY OF COMPREHENSIVE FUNCTIONAL
EDUCATION AND LITERACY IN THE PHILIPPINES

Paper Presented at the Asia Literacy Regional Forum
May 5-9, 1997
Galleria Suites, Pasig City

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- Part I. Informal, formal and non-formal education: relations, discontinuities and integration
- Part II. Historical development of adult education in the Philippines
- Part III. Lessons from our research
- Part IV. A research-based development model for a community-based literacy and functional education program
- Part V. Modelling an R & D approach to the delivery of comprehensive education and functional literacy: The Comprehensive Education and Community Development Program of Valencia, Negros Oriental

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A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT APPROACH TO THE DELIVERY OF COMPREHENSIVE FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION AND LITERACY IN THE PHILIPPINES 1,2

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Part I. Informal, formal and non-formal education: relations, discontinuities and integration

In order for a society or community to reproduce itself in the succeeding generations, knowledge, skills, values and attitudes are transmitted to the young at each stage of the life cycle, and in the course of day-to-day activities. It is in this fundamental sense that we speak of community life and activities as the proper context of the teaching-learning process.

Informal education is the technical term for this ongoing process. Conceived in this way, informal education is integral to community life, woven into its fabric, as it were. Informal education is carried out everywhere, individually or in groups depending on the activity. The providers of education could be anybody who was also involved in the activity and was considered knowledgeable enough to teach

With the introduction of the formal education system the teaching-learning process assumed a new form, fundamentally different from informal education in at least three ways: 1) the organization of the young into classes in schools, following a pre-determined sequence, schedule and levels of education (i.e. early childhood, elementary, secondary, post-secondary, tertiary); 2) the systematization of knowledge into disciplines, each within a distinctive and conceptual framework of disciplinary knowledge; 3) the consequent organization of knowledge transmission into subject areas in a pre-determined curriculum; and 4) the professionalization of knowledge transmitters (teachers) according to distinctive areas of specialization. It is in these senses that we conceive of the education process as a formal system.

1 Paper presented during the Asia Literacy Regional Forum, 7 May 1997 at the Galleria Suites, Pasig City.

2 Some parts of this paper have appeared in various publications, given In the Bibliography.

3 I wish to acknowledge the assistance of Nanette T. Abilay, Erwin Vargas, Roberto Ruda, Asia Canieso and the staff of the Education Research Program in the preparation of this paper.

In formal education systems which evolved directly from informal education, using as language of instruction the regional or national language, the discontinuities between formal and informal education are fewer. The main discontinuity would be in the increasing abstraction of knowledge from its practice in daily life, as well as its systematization and specialization. These three processes of abstraction, systematization and specialization constitute the formalization oil of knowledge, as distinguished from the practical knowledge of daily life.

In countries like the Philippines where the introduction of the formal education system as well as of a new written language(s) and the knowledge encoded in it were part of the process of colonization, the discontinuities are far greater and more complex, not only in the language and content of the knowledge to be transmitted, but also in its relevance to the daily life, practices, needs and aspirations of people in communities. This is the root cause of the problem of irrelevance of our formal education system to the lives and aspirations of our people.

Non-formal education, as the third type of education, is in a good position to bridge these discontinuities. Essentially, as in formal education, it involves a systematization of knowledge, but that kind of knowledge that has immediate and practical relevance and value to learners, mainly adult or out-of-school. Thus, it also partakes of one of the best features of informal education in which learning is closely and immediately linked to community life, needs and emerging situations. Some examples of this type of education are setting up a business, managing a rice mill or poultry business, setting up a cooperative.

The providers of non-formal education (i.e., the teachers) could be of several types academic experts or specialists from government agencies or the private sector, and community folk who are practitioners and therefore possess practical knowledge of the subject.

Because its purpose is short-term and immediate, non-formal education is best equipped to address the improvement of current community activities and solution of problems, as well as preparation for emerging situations which will require new skills. Thus, an important component of non-formal education is continuing education. Because of its systematic nature, non-formal education has also the potential to become a bridge program for those out-of-school youth who wish to return to formal

school but whose experience out of school may also have enriched their knowledge in many ways.

Part II. Historical development of adult education in the Philippines

Table 1 shows how the development of adult education has been part of a dynamic interaction between social problems, popular demands, the state and external factors. The problems of non-literacy, language and inequitable land distribution (1), gave rise to a broad people's movement incorporating counter education (2), provoking a response from the State, first of repression and then of some form of accommodation through various items of legislation (3), involving educational provisions and restructuring (4) but under the constraints of structural adjustment with specific reference to adult education (5).

Table 1. Interrlation of social problems, popular demands, state response, adult education provision and external constraints

Social Problems	People's demands	State response	Adult education provision and Restructuring	External Constraints
Relapse from Literacy to non-literacy Use of Foreign language Inequitable land distribution affecting - peasants - Moslem Filipinos - Indigenous Filipinos - Women	People's movement issues -Agrarian reform -Women's issues -Rights of Indigenous people -Separatist Moslem movement -Use of local and national languages - Foreign debt -People's participation in national decision-making Rise of People's organizations (POs) and NGOs	Initially, state repression resulting in human rights violations After EDSA Uprising in 1986: -Agrarian reform LAW -Commission on Human Rights -Local Gov't. Code -Organic Acts for Moslem Mindanao and Cordillera Regions -Philippine Development Plan for Women -Language Policy -Philippine Plan of Action on Education	- Education Acts of 1836 and 1865 - Education Program of the Philippine revolutionary Government, 1898 - Act 74 under the American Colonial - Commonwealth Act No. 80, 1936 - Community School Movement, 1950 - Education Program of the 1960s - Education Act of 1982 - Congressional Commission on Education, 1991	WB Structural Adjustment Policies

It is necessary to keep in mind that the details in the scheme do not comprise the whole historical and social development in the Philippines. Instead, they were purposely chosen to highlight the main threads of the issues and problems of adult education in the Philippines.

The laws and policies chosen for analysis are those enacted after the popular revolt known as the EDSA Uprising in 19186, but the historical details in the specific analysis of each law will show their roots in the social problems indicated in the first column. The Education Acts from 1863 up to the present are also included in this discussion, with specific reference to adult education provision. Specific historical and social details for each of the laws listed under column 3 (state response) are given in the analysis of various laws under specific titles.

Pre-colonial period

Education in the Philippines, as everywhere else, is intimately linked with the history and nature of its society. Before the arrival of the Spaniards in 1521, indigenous Filipinos of Malay stock lived in small villages practising a subsistence agriculture and carrying out a basic form of education in which children were taught reading, religion and self-defense. Writing was also taught, using a native alphabet of 17 letters, with bamboo tubes as the most popular writing tablets.

Spanish colonial period, 1521-1898

Early education under Spanish colonial rule, which formally began in 1565, mainly focused on Catholic doctrine, taught by Spanish missionaries who adopted a language policy of teaching in the indigenous languages by using a romanized script. Hundreds of materials written in the native script were burned in the process as "the work of the devil".

One of the effects of this policy was to create a separation between those who cooperated with the Spanish authorities and learned to write in the new script, and those who refused and fled to the inland mountainous regions of the islands.

By the late 18th century, partly because of the growing rebellion of the colonized population, a policy of "hispanization" through education was introduced, with the creation of a mass public elementary and secondary school system in 1863 and 1865, respectively. Furthermore, with the entry of the Philippine colony into a commercial agricultural export economy, more personnel were required to man the growing commercial and trading centers

in many regions of the Philippines, engaged in the production of cash crops for export. Thus the need for a mass public elementary and secondary school system. The children of the elite, however, continued to enjoy private elementary education of a higher quality, and access to tertiary education.

Meanwhile in the Southern Philippines, Filipinos had been Islamized by Arab traders as early as the 14th century and had developed a more advanced feudal society which consistently and successfully resisted Spanish, and later, American colonization. At present they make up about 10% of the population.

From this population come the ranks of separatist rebels of the present Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF). The main issues for the MNLF are the integrity of their cultural and social tradition, lack of representation in national decision-making and encroachment by the Christian majority, government and foreign corporation on their land and resources.

Revolutionary period, 1892-1898

The national revolution against Spain, initially led by Andres Bonifacio from the working class and supported by the peasants, was essentially a revolution fueled by agrarian unrest. But later on it was joined and taken over in leadership by the better educated local elite who had acquired liberal ideas from their education in Europe. The revolution, the first in Asia, succeeded in establishing the First Philippine Republic on June 12, 1898, even as it fought a war with newly arrived American colonial forces. This First Philippine Republic was also the first republican government in Asia.

It aimed to establish a public education system that was consciously counter to that which encouraged servility among Filipinos during the Spanish Colonial period. It also established the Universidad Cientifico Literaria de Filipinas "to promote the achievements of Filipino civilization".

The Philippine revolutionary government led by the Filipino elite surrendered to the American colonial forces on August 13, 1899, even as some Filipino revolutionaries continued to fight the American occupation forces in several areas up to 1911. Contrary to the agreements of nationalization of large landholdings forged between the peasants and the landed elite under the revolutionary government, the American colonial government under the Treaty of Paris agreed to respect existing inequitably distributed property rights thus further driving a wedge between the elite and the masses.

The peasantry descended from the latter group form the bulk of the present rebellion under the National Democratic Front (NDF), whose main

issues are inequitable land distribution, foreign domination of the economy, and democracy participation of the masses in national decision-making.

American colonial period, 1899-1935

In 1901, the American colonial government established a massive public elementary and secondary education system as part of its pacification and "Americanization" campaign using English as its main vehicle of Americanization.

Thus a third separation was effected between the landed elite who knew both English and Spanish, and the landless peasants who were oftentimes both illiterate and non-English speaking. This is an important point to remember in understanding the social demand for English instruction as well as for formal education leading to diplomas and certification which are seen as passports to jobs and social mobility.

Commonwealth period, 1935-1946

The educational policies of the Commonwealth Period (1933-1946) were generally a continuation of the compromises worked out on a primary, secondary and vocational education in the previous decade.

One of the first acts of the Philippine Commonwealth Government set up as a transition government prior to the grant of independence was Commonwealth Act No. 80 in 1936 creating the Office of Adult Education under the Department of Public Instruction. In local circles, this is recorded as the formal institution of adult education (called non-formal education) in the country. In fact, as the above discussion has shown this is actually the transfer of the vocational-industrial education program (which had become commercially unprofitable) from the formal to the non-formal system. This explains in part the predominantly vocational orientation (in addition to literacy training) of the non-formal education program of the Department of Education, offering adult classes in dressmaking, tailoring, hair science, among others.

Structurally, the effect of this legislation was the institution of the non-formal (adult education) stream into the education system and the limiting of the formal education stream to the elementary, secondary and tertiary education levels. In terms of the curriculum, the separation of the school and community became more pronounced, an orientation that continues to this day. In terms of expansion and funding, the formal sector was given top priority, and the non-formal (adult) education sector very low funding, to the point of virtual neglect.

Vocational schools were made more similar in curriculum to academic high schools. The schools became appropriate means for general social

mobility, and the great majority of vocational-school graduates reportedly went into nontechnical occupations. The schemes to employ specialized agricultural graduates on public lands and on the commercial plantations to absorb more than a fraction of trade-school graduates. The new vocational schools did, however, expand political patronage distribution and did symbolize hope. Some communities received these schools from their political patrons. In return for this hope and patronage, the village chieftain and his followers owed these leaders a measure of loyalty (Foley, 1971).

Another act of the Commonwealth government under President Quezon was to push for the change of the language of instruction to the national language (Tagalog-based), but with his death in 1943 and the Japanese Occupation of the country, this change was not formally institutionalized. A continuing vestige of this orientation of President Quezon is the celebration of National Language Week in August of every year, coinciding with the anniversary of President Quezon's birth.

Post-war period, 1946- 1972

The Office of Adult Education continued up to the post-war period until 1947 when it was changed to the Adult and Community Education Division of the Bureau to help rebuild war-torn Philippine communities, and partly in line with the general "community development" direction of educational reform for developing countries which had become current fashion during that period.

The community school idea, piloted in many provinces in the country sought to reconcile adult non-formal education and the formal education and to link more integrally the school with its community. As slated in its philosophy, its main objective was "to integrate the education of the child with that of the adult toward home and community betterment, to utilize community resources in instruction in order to make school learning fundamentally related to the realities of life, and to develop children, youth and adults to become useful members of society through participation in democratic life." One of the most significant experiments of this program was the shift in literacy instruction to Pilipino and the local languages (now known as the Rizal Experiment) showing that literacy was achieved more quickly with the use of the local and national language. But this important finding has been continually glossed over in decisions regarding the language of instruction.

The next major policy shift was in 1960 after the second major Philippine survey (called the Swanson survey) funded by the US International Cooperation Administration and the National Economic Council of the Philippines. This survey, using the human capital formation approach, recommended among others a "2-2 plan" in secondary education

combining vocational and general education in equal measure, as well as the re-establishment of vocational, industrial and trade high schools.

On account of the criticism of the Community School Idea, included in the Swanson Report, the community school orientation was abandoned. With the resurgence of agrarian unrest in the 1950s led by the Hukbalahaps (originally guerilla forces against the Japanese Occupation Forces in World War II), community development activities in some regions of the country became part of the counter-insurgency campaign (e.g. nationwide campaign for law and order, holding community assemblies).

Martial law period, 1972-1983

The next major policy shift occurred in 1972 under the Martial Law regime with the reorganization of the educational system (Presidential Decree 6-A) which created the 13 political regions), abolished the Adult and Community Education Division and enlarged the National Manpower Youth Council (NMYC) originally set up in 1969. The shift from the vocational to the industrial-technical orientation under NMYC was called for by the Philippine Development Plan for that period which, among others, mandated the "training" of manpower for middle level skills required for national development. In the context of the Plan, these new technical skills were needed for the export industrial zones to be set up in the country, and for the eventual policy of exporting technician labor for overseas contract work. Presidential Decree 6-A restructured the formal educational system to include vocational-technical education as the third level (after elementary and secondary education) in the four-level formal education system (the fourth being the tertiary level). The total cost of the educational restructuring program from 1973-1983 was US\$700.53 of which 35 percent was from the WB and ADB loan., and 65 percent from Philippine government counterpart. At that time, this loan was the largest incurred for education projects. Within this period, Presidential Decree 1177 was issued in 1977 to revise the budget process to include, among others, automatic appropriation for debt service (Section 32). This meant that all debt service obligations had to be appropriated first (up to 40% of the total budget) before all other government expenditures could be considered in the General Appropriations Act.

Meanwhile, the Labor Code of the Philippines was amended by Presidential Decree 442 to include the Overseas Employment Industry and the Corporate Export Program, the Overseas Employment Development Board, the National Seamen Board and Foreign Exchange Remittance (Rules 7, 9,10,13). Originally intended as a stop-gap measure to bridge domestic unemployment due to the inability of the local economy to provide for the 700,000 or so new entrants to labor force every year, the labor export policy has now become "permanently temporary", according to a Philippine senator.

The contribution of the education system to the continuation of this labor export policy is its production of an English-speaking and highly flexible labor force with the ability to adjust to diverse social and work environments overseas: from Filipino construction workers to the Middle East in the second half of the 1970s, the labor force quickly shifted in the 1980s to work in the service, industrial and agricultural sectors abroad, then in the latter part of the 1980s to fill up the labor shortages in Japan, Taiwan and other Asian industrializing countries, and the newly created demand for female workers-domestics in Italy, Hongkong, Canada and Singapore, and entertainers particularly in Japan. This does not include migration to the US, mainly of high-level professionals which continues unabated, with the Philippine migration to the US now accounting for 19.09 percent of the world immigration to that country.

According to International Labor Organization (ILO) figures, the Philippines is now the largest exporter of OCWs in Asia Second ranking Bangladesh is a far second, with 147,000 workers deployed abroad in 1991, to the Philippines' 721,000 (Philippine News and Features, 9 January 1993). The Philippines is now also the biggest donor of doctors to the First World even as its infant mortality rate stands at 52.5 per thousand (What Crisis? IBON Databank, 1983).

Two other presidential decrees in 1977 sought to institute adult education: 1) a school-on-the-air program called "Lingap ng Pangulo sa Barangay" (How the President Cares for the Communities), essentially to teach farm and home technologies, and as an information and propaganda program on the activities of the Martial law government, and 2) a presidential decree directing all schools to open extension or outreach programs for their surrounding communities. Some of these outreach adult education programs were quickly transformed into counter education efforts in the latter part of the Marcos dictatorship.

Meanwhile, a mass movement had begun to rise again, deriving its impetus from several quarters: 1) the continuing agrarian unrest in the countryside under the influence of the NDF and the Communist Party of the Philippines, 2) the separatist aspirations of Muslim Filipinos under the MNLF, 3) the student and teacher movements in the cities initially fueled by demands to end Philippine participation in the Vietnam War, 4) the workers movement for increased trade union rights and more equitable distribution, 5) the progressive sectors of the Christian churches deriving their mandate from Vatican II and the World Council of Churches, 6) the feminist movement, 7) liberal intellectuals, and 8) businessmen and other elites shunted out of power by the practice of "crony capitalism."

Many of these groups began to conduct their own counter-education efforts both in the formal and non-formal sectors. These counter-education efforts, characterized by a social historian as the most significant education reorientation since the American occupation, helped to create the condition that led to the overthrow of the dictatorship. These efforts were directed towards various organized sectors, the adult clientele generally unserved by the formal education system. The initial response of the State was repression and violence resulting in massive human rights violations, which triggered off even more counter-education and organized efforts to protect human rights.

Partly to counteract the counter-education efforts of the popular movement, Presidential Decree 1139 was issued in 1977 by the Martial law government creating the position of Undersecretary of Education and Culture for non-formal education. This decree re-inserted non-formal education into the education bureaucracy after the abolition of the Bureau of Adult Education in 1969. The Education Act of 1982 incorporated all the relevant provisions, existing laws and presidential decrees on education issued from 1972, under PD 6-A (Education Act of 1972). The coverage of the Act applied to both formal and non-formal education, public or private, in all levels of the education system.

EDSA and post-EDSA period, 1986 to present

The watershed EDSA Uprising of February 1986 marked the powerful but short-lived coalition of a wide assortment of organized groups and disgruntled military forces as well as a huge mass of unorganized individuals who had espoused the various issues, mentioned earlier. But the fragile political coalition forged among anti-Marcos forces quickly dissolved, in part due to the extreme divergence of political interests which have their basis on centuries old inequity, and the inability of the Aquino administration to balance political demands in the face of continued threats to its stability mainly from the rebel military faction which mounted a total of seven coups d'etat during her administration.

One of the most important consequences of the EDSA Uprising is the passage from a "parochial" and "subject" political orientation to a participant orientation, particularly among organized groups, involving an "awareness of decisional political processes and outputs as well as a belief that the citizen has the right to participate" (Wurfel, 1989).

Thus, in spite of the fact that no major electoral reforms have been legislated to significantly alter the composition of the predominantly elite Philippine Congress, the issues and demands raised by various groups which continue their adult education efforts in the popular education mode, have found their way into the 1987 Constitution as well as in legislation.

In 1991, the Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) was organized by law to investigate the problems of Philippine education and implementing the constitutional provisions on education. Its package of recommendations which were expected to form the basis for the Education Act of 1991 was instead filed as separate bills. Among others, the recommendations included further expansion of elementary and secondary education, change in the language of instruction from English (in Math and Science) to Filipino in all subjects at the elementary and secondary levels, restructuring of the administration of education through the creation of three distinct branches (Department of Basic Education, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, TESDA, and Commission on Higher Education, CHED).

To date, aside from the expansion of the formal basic education levels, only the reorganization of the education system through the creation of CHED and TESDA has been enacted. The change in the language policy remains a subject of debate. Vocational-technical education has become more deeply entrenched through TESDA but adult non-formal education is served only through a statement that "initiatives of the private and public sectors to provide non-traditional education services through alternative delivery systems should be encouraged and given" An equivalency system to enable learners to transfer from the non-formal to the formal education stream is also provided.

Contextual Analysis of the Sectoral Problems

On the basis of the historical and social context of adult education in the Philippines above, the most significant legislation and policies, among others, appear to be: 1) the agrarian reform law, 2) creation of autonomous regions for indigenous and Muslim Filipino communities, 3) the local government code which is a significant move towards decentralization and people participation at the grass roots, 4) Philippine education reforms, 5) language policy, 6) literacy under Education For All 7) human rights education and 8) Philippine Development Plan for Women.

Very clearly, these laws, mainly derived from the 1987 Constitutional mandates, are attempts by the government to accommodate various social demands expressed by the popular movement. However, while the mandate is clear, from the point of view of organized groups, the laws arrived at by an elite-dominated Congress have failed to meet all the social demands and are deficient in terms of educational needs.

For the unorganized masses which form the bulk of the population, their lack of access to the language of the legislation (English), their general

lack of information on the intricacies of the Constitution and the laws, and their general non-participation in the national decision-making process ensure the continuance of the politics of patronage.

Thus, as the separate analyses of these laws show, what has happened is that no broad social consensus has been reached on the solutions proposed in the legislations, and organized social groups continue their struggle for reform and change, including their own separate education efforts.

Detailed below for each legislation is the status of the acceptance of the legislation as well as of the education efforts of both government and the organized sectors:

Agrarian reform

- Non-acceptance of the legislation by organized farmers groups and continued pressure for an alternative land reform code.
- Organized farmers' groups representing both the radical and moderate factions attempted to pass PARCODE (People's Agrarian Reform Code) through people's initiative but failed to get the required 10% voters' signatures.
- As a government official from the Bureau of Agrarian Reform Information and Education (BARIE) desk stated in our interview, the main problem for their education program is the non-acceptance of the legislation itself.
- BARIE runs its information and education programs, linked up with other line agencies such as the Department of Tourism, Environment and Natural Resources, Agriculture and the Land Bank of the Philippines. Funds are reported to be meager and are drawn from the P50 B general funding for the Agrarian Reform Program where there is no amount strictly allocated for education and information.
- Organized farmers' groups have set up their own institute (Philippine Peasants Institute) which runs its own education program. Funds are from foreign grants. There is no allocation from government.

Human Rights Education

- The government organized a Commission on Human Rights (CHR) after 1986. Task Force Detainees of the Philippines (TFDP) was organized in 1974 to document human rights violations, to run HR education programs and to advocate HR protection. TFDP received an award from UNESCO for its work.

- CHR and TFDP have a basic disagreement on the definition of human rights. CHR documents all atrocities regardless of who perpetuates them (government or rebel forces). TFDP documents only HR violations committed by government forces since they say that according to internationally accepted definitions and standards, HR protection is a state responsibility and obligation. Atrocities committed by rebel forces are classified as crimes and are already punishable under the Penal Code.

- As a result of this disagreement, statistics on HR violations of both groups are widely divergent, as are their HR education programs.

- Under Executive Order No. 27 (Education to Maximize Respect For Human Rights) a private foundation has succeeded with great difficulty in inserting HR education into specific subjects in the elementary and secondary curriculum. All costs of this program including seminars for teachers are borne by the private foundation, mostly from foreign grants.

Language Policy

- Since the 1950s the mass movement has campaigned for the use of Filipino as official language of government and as medium of instruction, in order to close the gap between the elite and the masses, and to ensure communication among all sectors and government.

- The 1987 Constitution identify Filipino as national language and, together with English, it is one of two official languages of government

- Executive Order 335 enjoins all government agencies "to take steps as are necessary for the purpose of using Filipino in official transactions..."

- In spite of the above pronouncements and the social support for Filipino, the language policy remains confused. All official government communication, plans, legislations, policies are still in English (except for the Constitution which has been translated to Filipino). The Department of Education has a bilingual policy in which math and science are taught in English, and all other subjects are taught in Filipino at the elementary and secondary levels. All tertiary level courses are taught in English, except for the University of the Philippines which has a language policy

providing for gradual transition to Filipino in five years. The recommendation to shift to Filipino at the elementary and secondary levels from the Congressional Commission on Education has not been enacted into law.

Local Government Code

- The Local Government Code provides for the decentralization of authority to enhance participation of the citizenry in local governance.
- Organized groups have expressed no objection to the Code. The Code recognizes two types of adult education required: one for local officials and another for the citizenry. For local officials human resource development and capability building are indicated, particularly with respect to the basic understanding of the Code, its implementing regulations (in two big volumes, both in English) and its implications for local governance.
- For the citizenry, education provision is needed for the understanding and responsible application of people's participation in local governance, as provided in the Code.
- There are no specific budgetary allocations for these educational requirements, dependent as they are on local resources which are very uneven. At present, some education is provided for more affluent local government units. But even in these units, there is no systematic program for the education of the local citizenry.
- Some NGOs and POs have fielded candidates in the local elections and they have won. For those belonging to these organized groups, some education is bound to be provided.
- The lack of education of the general citizenry on the nature, extent and obligations of participation perhaps accounts for the fact that, up to now, no people's initiative has been launched, and in general, no dramatic change has yet been observed with respect to participation of the citizenry in local governance under the Code.

Indigenous peoples

- Based on the Constitutional mandate for indigenous Filipinos, Congress enacted two organic acts for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) and for the Cordillera Autonomous Region (CAR). The ARMM organic act is part of government effort to contain the separatist

movement led by the Moro National Liberation Front starting from the early 60s; CAR is part of government effort to accommodate demands for respect of ethnic (tribal) culture and for local control over valued resources (land and mineral) which have to date been grossly exploited by the lowland majority, government and foreign corporations.

- The organic act for ARMM was ratified by only four out of 13 provinces. The organic act for CAR was ratified by only one of 5 provinces and one city in the Cordilleras.

- In 1990, the Supreme Court declared the CAR organic act unconstitutional because only one province ratified it. Then, an earlier Executive Order 220 creating the Cordillera Administrative Region remains as the operational law in the Cordillera.

- In Muslim Mindanao, ARMM is operative in those provinces that have ratified it; the rest of the provinces and cities are governed according to the Local Government Code.

- Explanations put forward for the rejection of the organic acts center around three points:

- 1) Both the Constitution and the organic acts were erroneously premised on the government view that the ethnic groups in the region were unified and thus they could negotiate with a single group or representative from the region.

- 2) The organic acts gave the autonomous governments "a panoply of political and administrative powers" but reserved for the central government such important powers as defense, security, share in national taxes. Furthermore, some groups aver that the rights of the minority peoples as contained in the Acts are compromised and contradicted by wider economic development policies which include their land and resources. The acts are perceived to be quasi-social welfare instrumentalities that only perpetuate dependence rather than self-reliance of indigenous peoples.

- 3) In fact, since the Acts say nothing about the recognition and enforcement of ancestral rights over ancestral lands which have already been encroached upon (basic problem in both regions), it appears that the Acts were merely solutions for the neutralization of militant and armed movements.

- Educational requirements for these historically underserved regions are large but while there are plans, budgetary allocations are dependent upon the regions which are among the poorest in the country.

Women

- The status of Filipino women in pre-colonial times was equal to the men

Cultural proofs are local legends depicting man and woman to have come from a single bamboo split into two, the bilateral kinship system (reckoned on both the father's and the mother's side), and the widespread existence of female shamans.

The feudal system, debt peonage and sharecropping institutionalized under Spanish colonial rule transformed women into objects of subjugation. This orientation was enshrined in the Civil Code but an attempt to correct this is found in Article II of the 1987 Constitution on the role of women in nation building and their fundamental equality with men before the law. The new Family Code and related legislations (PDPW) made further corrections on the status of women.

- The Philippine Development Plan for Women (PDPW), issued as a companion policy paper for the Philippine Development Plan (or Philippines 2000), is the first government policy paper on women. However, women's issues have long been included in the mass movement, and various POs and NGOs of and for women are in existence.

- The main criticisms by NGOs and POs of the Plan are: 1) PDPW puts more emphasis on the expanded inclusion of women in labor or industrial sector rather than increasing their access to resources, and 2) the Plan erroneously dichotomizes class and gender oppression, identifying biological determination or masculine/feminine dichotomy" as "the most pervasive perspective that has resulted in the marginalization of women."

- Educational objectives of the PDPW (limited only to women in labor) focus on trade and industry and industrial relations (pp. 19-23, Analysis) but budgetary allocations and mechanisms for enforcement and implementation are not explicit. The education provisions are expected to be delivered and paid for by various concerned line agencies of government but no explicit coordinating mechanisms are indicated. A section in the current General Appropriations Act contains a budget proposal for women's projects. The present budget of the NCRFW (main government agency to implement and coordinate Plan implementation) is P12 million but this goes to administrative and building maintenance expenses.

- NGOs and POs for women continue their education efforts which are different from those of the Plan.

Literacy

- The Philippine basic literacy is 89.8%, one of the highest in the region. The functional literacy rate is 73.2%.
- Adult literacy provision is generally inadequate, with the Bureau of Non-Formal Education reporting that it is able to service only 1.07% of the estimated clientele of adult education, including literacy.
- Since literacy implies, among others, the application and use of reading, writing and numeracy on printed materials, the problem of inadequate literacy training for adults cannot be addressed without considering the predominant language used for these materials, especially technical materials (English), and the low quality and non-functional content of basic education. The popular insistence for formal education, apart from the desire for certification for employment and social mobility, is precisely in recognition of the fact that in school one can learn English which will enable him/her to gain access to printed materials.
- Both the LCC and the National EFA Plan fail to recognize and provide for this reality, addressing only literacy training without considering the language situation in the country, the provisions for the language used in the printed materials, and the general adult literacy and basic education requirements implied in the new legislations, especially those included in the present report.
- In any case, the National EFA Plan is long in objectives but very short on implementation, with only one nationwide adult literacy project (Magbassa Kita) implemented to date. The report on EFA has been found to be very evasive on actual funding (with a targeted fund of P9.05 B) and on actual results. In fact, since it is now integrated into the DECS Strategic Plan (Education 2000), there are fears that its realization as a special project is now imperilled.
- The Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) is limited to coordination of literacy efforts and funding of research and census projects, but it is not clear what it will coordinate.
- NGOs and POs continue their own education and literacy efforts, outside the mainstream of government effort.

The system of adult education in the Philippines

Based on the 1990 Census report, the Philippine population has reached 61.5 M and its labor force (15 years old and above) is 24.2 M. The labor force has been characterized in the report of the 1991 Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM) as 1) relatively young (49.4 between 15-35

age group); 2) predominantly male (63.1%); 3) under-educated (49.78% completed only Grade 6 or less); 4) largely rural-based (62.1%); 5) engaged mostly in low value-added agricultural occupations (44.5% in farming and fishing); and 6) predominantly engaged in self-employment and unpaid family work (54.9%) (EDCOM Report, Vol. 2).

To this number must be added the estimated 4.1 million deployed overseas landbased contract workers (OCWs) and seamen (1984-92) who earn the largest foreign exchange for the country, and come mostly from the service, professional-technical and production process sectors.

The latest available (1988-1989) number and distribution of employed persons by major occupation group and highest grade completed are shown that by far it is the labor force in the agricultural, husbandry and forestry sector that has the lowest educational attainment (78.6% of the labor force with no grade completed).

The occupational distribution of OCWs shows the preponderance and dramatic increase of professional, technical and related workers, service workers, and production process workers who went abroad from 1975-1981, (data from the National Economic Development Authority), during the first years of the institution of the labor export policy. The same pattern holds up to the present time. (Note: This distribution does not include high-level professionals who migrated to other countries, particularly USA and Canada.)

The above data 1) suggest the rapid depletion due to export labor of manpower with relatively high educational qualifications (predominantly college and undergraduate college); 2) help to explain the EDCOM characterization (given above) of the labor force (that remain in the country) as predominantly under-educated and rural-based, and 3) give an indication of the relatively minimal impact of the vocational-technical education stream on the quality of the manpower pool that remains in the country.

This analysis is a departure from the usual and official analysis (including EDCOM) of the Philippine manpower pool which does not take into account the size of the OCW deployment and the effects of the present labor export policy. Exported Philippine labor is now the highest in the Asian Region and the most "lucrative" of Philippine exports, to put it cynically. From the industrial education program producing exports of lace, handicraft and furniture, our present vocational-technical stream, among others, also prepares Filipinos for export.

In the present Philippine educational structure is presented by EDCOM below (Figure 1). It will be noted that in this schema, the non-formal education structure is not included. However, the organizational chart of the Department of Education (Fig. 2) includes the Bureau of Technical and

Vocational Education (BTVE) which operates technical-vocational schools offering certificates and diploma programs for 2-3 year courses as well as short-term training programs. It also includes the Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) which runs literacy training and livelihood skills development for adults.

With the recent enactment into law as proposed by EDCOM of the bills creating the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), the present organization of the Dept. of Education will assume the form originally proposed by EDCOM in 1991 (Fig 3). In this organizational structure, there will only be three main divisions: Department of Basic Education, TESDA and CHED. All vocational-technical education excluding non-formal non-voc-tech adult education will be consolidated under TESDA. Instead of a Bureau of Non-formal Education, there will be a Center for Non-Formal Education which will coordinate with the Department of Basic Education. This Center has yet to be established.

In our historical analysis (previous section), we have shown that from the late 1920s, with the collapse of the export-oriented production under the industrial education program, the question of defining adult education has always been problematic. This is not the case with the formal education sector where both the development of and statistics about elementary, secondary and tertiary education are clear and periodically reported.

We have also shown in this historical analysis that with the entry of the World Bank and IMF into education project lending, the emphasis of adult education (in the broad sense) has been on the development of the technical-vocational sector. At the same time, there has been virtual government neglect of the non-formal adult education sector whose traditional clientele would be those in the agricultural, husbandry and forestry occupational group, the uneducated and low-educated group who form the mass of the general population. Into this neglected sector, the NGOs and POs of the mass movement entered in the late 60's with counter-education, literacy and other political education efforts.

The table below (Table 2) is our construction of the present adult education system. The bulk of government funds (including those from the World Bank and IMF) for adult education goes to Items 1,2, and 4. The Department of Education, Culture and Sports-Bureau of Non-Formal Education (DECS-BNFE), item 3, gets the lowest funding of all the bureaus under the Department of Education, but this is the bureau that serves the non-voc-tech adult education sector.

Education-training activities in items 5, 6 and 7 are mainly private, unorganized, generally undocumented initiatives, except for those initiated

as outreach programs by state universities. Items 5, 6 and 7 are mainly private, unorganized, generally undocumented initiatives, except for those initiated as outreach programs by state universities. Items 5 and 6 are also voc-tech oriented. Item 7 is predominantly serves less educated adults. Item 8 is the largest non-voc-tech adult education sector. However, because of its origins in the mass movement which offered the most organized resistance against authoritarian rule, the scope of activities and the network remains undocumented.

Table 2. Schematic analysis of the adult education in the Philippines.

Types of adult education

Formal vocational/technical

1. Vocational trade high schools.
2. Post-secondary vocational education two- or three-year programs with certification or diploma, organized by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports - Bureau of Technical and Vocational Education (DECS-BTVE), as well as by State Universities and Colleges and the National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC).

Non-formal

3. Programs run by the Department of Education, Culture and Sports - Bureau of Non-Formal Education (DECS-BNFE): basic and functional literacy training; livelihood skills development.
4. Short-term training programs run by NMYC and other government-related agencies.
5. Private sector programs of less than two years, e.g. those run by the Don Bosco Meralco Foundation.
6. Industry-related apprenticeship training programs.
7. Programs run by the academic sector (e.g. farmers' courses run by the University of the Philippines), and by religious sector (e.g. livelihood training).
8. Programs run by the NGOs and "peoples" organizations: counter education, including literacy and skills training but with a political agenda.

The mass movement is organized by sector (e.g. women, urban poor, teachers, workers, etc.), by territory (geographic regions) and for quick mobilization by issue or multisectorally (e.g. foreign debt, anti-GATT, anti-logging). The mass organizations divided along these lines are called people's organizations (POs); and each PO has one or two NGOs which serve as their service institution delivering services such as education.

Activities of these groups are sometimes foreign funded but actual services are delivered usually by unpaid volunteers from the ranks of students and activists who may or may not have the professional training required for the job.

Analysis of Trends

From all the preceding discussions, general trends can be gleaned on the legislative and policy framework as well as the general directions of adult education in the Philippines:

Our analysis in Table 2 shows two main streams of adult education. Our historical analysis, as well as our analysis of WB IMF structural adjustment in the Philippines has shown that as far as the formal vocational-technical stream is concerned, the legislative and policy framework is towards the institutionalization and the formalization of voc-tech education. At present, the further consolidation and institutionalization of voc-tech education with the objective of developing "high-quality Filipino middle level manpower responsive to and in accordance with Philippine development goals and priorities" has been achieved through the TESDA Act of 1994 (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority). Under this Act, all units doing voc-tech education and training which before were under different agencies will now be part of TESDA. These include: the National Manpower and Youth Council (NMYC), the Bureau of Technical and Vocational Education (BTVE), and the apprenticeship programs of the Bureau of Local Employment of the Dept. of Labor and Employment. Regional and provincial units of TESDA are expected to be established.

With the creation of TESDA, items 2, 4, and 6 in Table 1 will be consolidated.

Item 1 (vocational high schools) will be transformed into general vocational/academic high schools just like all the other high schools in the country with a curriculum mix of 65 academic and 35 vocational. Item 5 (private sector initiatives) will most likely be drawn into TESDA, particularly for purposes of school licensing and regulation.

Item 7 (academic and religious sectors) are likely to continue on their own. If however this section will opt for eventual certification of their graduates, they will have to be drawn into TESDA.

With the eventual abolition of DECS-BNFE, the basic and functional literacy training for adults will be under the coordination of the Literacy Coordinating Council. It is worth pointing out that at present DECS-BNFE serves only a reported 1.07% of its potential adult clientele.

What remains very unclear is the future development of the largest nonformal adult education sector, namely the programs run by NGOs and people's organizations (item 8). Those organizations that decide to work with the government will benefit from a three-year Asian Development Bank Loan of US\$31.5 million for non-formal adult education, but when the loan has run out resources are likely to be scarce. The NGOs and POs that do not take part in the ADB-funded program will continue to seek independent funding, largely from private foreign sources. However, these sources are also dwindling and are not Likely to improve in the near future.

The Congressional Commission mission on Education has proposed an equivalency system in which people from the non-formal stream can enter the formal stream. However, in the new educational structure there will be virtually no government provision for non-formal, non-vocational/technical adult education. Therefore the proposed equivalency system will not work unless local government units make a serious effort to take up the non-formal adult education program.

Clearly, therefore, there are many serious questions in relation to the future of non-formal adult education in the Philippines. These questions need to be seriously addressed by the Congressional Commission on Education, local government units, NGOs, POs and other actors concerned. Meanwhile, given the increasing tendency for policy-makers to favor a purely vocational/technical form of adult education, NGOs and POs must continue their education efforts despite the difficulties. The work of educating the mass of our population is essential if we are to create educated and aware citizens who are capable of taking their full part in the process of nation-building and human development.

Part III . Lessons from our research

If non-formal education can serve as bridge to discontinuities between informal education going on in the communities and formal education through a national mass education system, it is proper to begin the research

on what could contribute to a context-specific community-based literacy and functional nonformal education program.

Considerations for a context-specific community-based literacy and functional non-formal education program in the Philippines

Our research tells us that when we speak of a context-specific or community-based literacy and functional education program, we need to consider at least seven aspects.

1. The nature of community life

The nature of community life as shown in 1) the levels of cooperation and organization among the community members, 2) the types of community activities, particularly livelihood-economic, political-civic and socio-cultural activities, and 3) the processes of development or stagnation operating in the community. Our research tells us that our communities vary on this aspect and therefore it is not possible to have exactly the same kind of program for all communities. It also implies that local people and officials need to be involved even as early as the planning stage in order that they can help to determine the kind of functional education program that is good for them. The Rapid Community Assessment conducted in Sorsogon and Cotabato under the ADB-DECS-BNFE-UP-ERP Literacy Research and Development Program, a commissioned research under the Philippine Non-Formal Education Project, showed that local people have the capability to do the baseline research needed for the design of their local literacy program.

2. Extent of literacy practice within the community

There are communities at one extreme where the mode is largely oral and where only a few activities are carried out in writing, at the other end there are communities where literate practice of reading and writing are already well integrated into the central economic and other activities of the community.

Thus, it is clear for example that for a largely oral community the literacy program must include not only the actual teaching of literacy and numeracy skills but also the rapid provision of reading materials and the conscious application of these skills in people's daily activities. One way to do this would be to incorporate some parts of the literacy program in a barangay or municipal development project such as road-building where for one or two hours each week, a class would be held for those employed in the project to teach both literacy and work skills. Another would be to ask employers in private establishments like a rice mill to allow their workers to attend a one-hour session per week in which literacy teaching is incorporated into training for work efficiency and greater productivity.

I am sure that if program planners keep an open mind to these possibilities and allow community folk and local officials to participate in the planning, we shall all be pleasantly surprised by the various creative and imaginative ways by which literacy teaching can be integrated into community activities and local government projects. Another output of one of our projects under the Philippine Non-Formal Education Project are the new kinds of taxonomies which will give numerous examples on what literacy and numeracy skills can be incorporated into many kinds of economic, civic-political and socio-cultural activities. Some examples are: participating in local and national elections, operating a carinderia or sari-sari store, setting up and membership in a cooperative. All these are with a view to increasing work and income productivity as well as participation of people in literate practice.

3. Use of locally-adapted and indigenous materials

The third aspect of community-based programs is the use of community and indigenous knowledge as a starting point for the content for these programs. Our usual conceptualization of the possible content of literacy and development programs begins with our listing of what people do not know so that it can be "given" or taught to them. But people who are illiterate are not *mangmang* or ignorant; they have a whole store of knowledge in the oral mode. What they do not know is the knowledge found in books because it is not accessible to them. Most of the time this knowledge is from the West, and perhaps some of these are even inappropriate or irrelevant.

However, it should be remembered from our colonial history that the forcible introduction during colonization of a new literate tradition using the Roman script not only obliterated our own alphabet or alibata but also developed a form of literate practice which negated and alienated us from our own knowledge in the oral tradition, with value consequences on our conceptions of ourselves, of the world, of our place in it, and of the kinds of skills and competencies developed in the population. This is particularly true of the poor and less educated who have never truly mastered the new language(s) and the knowledge which it encodes. Thus, the high basic literacy rate of 89.2% has no deep roots in terms of capacity for reflective, creative and abstract thought, if done in the foreign language (English) using equally foreign materials. The introduction of the Roman script became confounded with other social elements that were introduced with it— new languages (Spanish and later English), Western knowledge, and new property relations from communal to private property, with those able to write in Spanish and in the Roman script given priority in the land titling process. In fact this latter development is the principal reason why poverty and illiteracy are so closely correlated in our population.

When young people enter the formal school system, the invalidation of community knowledge becomes complete, confronted as they are with new knowledge whose validity is established by the fact that it comes in print, and it is the subject of the evaluation (examination). All previous non-school knowledge not found in the text are summarily dismissed as superstition or at least ignored.

But hundreds of sayings reported across the sites give practical advice: on wind direction, weather and good fishing practices, on correct planting methods and preventing soil depletion, on extensive herbal lore, on good nutrition especially for nursing mother and children, on family planning, on interpersonal relations.

Since almost none of this knowledge is to be found in the printed text, the possibility of revaluation and reconciliation of oral knowledge with textbook knowledge is lost.

For example, gender equality has pre-colonial roots in the Philippines and it survives to this day: in our recent study, the men and women of the Ita of Zambales are reported to work side by side in the fields, and the right of women to be heard in the traditional court is upheld by the Ifugao; descent is still reckoned bilaterally everywhere in the Philippines and gender equality is symbolized graphically in the myth of the first man and woman coming from a split bamboo.

The concept of a sustainable agriculture operates in the rice terracing system which has been in continuous use since long before colonial times, and everywhere Filipino schoolchildren sing "Bahay Kubo" (My Nipa Hut) which contains me detailed prescription for all the plants which should be found in an ecologically sound, diversified Filipino home garden complete with nitrogen-fixing legumes. Unfortunately, while this song continues to be sung and copied in schoolchildren's notebooks, the prescriptions are ignored. And to date, we have completed an extensive scientific study of the rice terraces in the Cordillera.

Under the Philippine Non-Formal Education Project, we did four studies of community knowledge, indigenous learning systems and ethnomathematics in the algebra of Kankanay weaving patterns, music and kinship structures as a first step in retrieving our traditional knowledge and putting it in the curriculum of non-formal programs. We also completed an inventory of existing materials that can be used for literacy instruction in all regions of our country.

In sum, the importance of a community-based approach to our literacy and functional program is confirmed in two of our recent studies using different

approaches. Our 1993 UNESCO award-winning Ethnographic study on functional literacy using the methods of anthropology and sociology established the importance of the community as the single most important factor for the development of literacy practice.

4. Development of a literate tradition in the communities and its effects on cognitive abilities on individuals.

In the psychological study of A. Bernardo on the cognitive consequences of literacy which also won the 1996 UNESCO literacy award, it was found that across various cognitive tasks and across all communities, there was no reliable advantage found for the literate over the illiterates. Therefore, there seems to be no direct cognitive benefit of acquiring literacy as far as the individuals in these communities are concerned.

However, the performance of participants seems to be predicted by the degree to which the community has integrated literacy activities into the central activities of the community. On one extreme, one community showed a very marked discontinuity between literacy and other community activities. Residents of this community tended to perform poorest in the cognitive tasks, regardless of individual variations in literacy level. On the other extreme, residents of a community that has integrated literacy and socio-economic activities (through the efforts of a people's organization) tended to perform better in the cognitive tasks, regardless of individual variations in literacy level.

It was found that the cognitive benefits of literacy are probably mediated rather than direct, that is, cognitive changes are a result of being part of a literate community. This suggests that efforts directed towards developing a more literate and more thoughtful population should be directed to integrating literacy activities to the central economic and sociocultural activities of the communities and not just to teaching literacy. In such an approach even illiterates should be able to develop advanced thinking skills. We also ensure the sustainability of the literacy practices (whether acquired formally or informally) in the community.

5. Incorporation of livelihood and development components in literacy programs

Another important implication from this study is that the whole notion of the eradication of illiteracy by teaching only literacy-numeracy skills without consciously integrating these into community activities is bound to result in individuals slipping back to illiteracy or semi-literacy. This is because it is the community activities that provide the social support which will prevent the loss of literacy skills and enhance their expansion into literate practice.

Put in another way, the community-based approach requires the development of whole communities into literate and developmental communities in order that individuals can retain their skills by application and daily use. This is why I believe that an inter-agency effort at the national and local levels will make a very important difference in the success or failure of our non-formal program. This is a confirmation of the 1983 study on literacy retention done by DECS and by our 1993 Ethnographic Study which states that:

Four out of every 5 drop-outs left school between Grades 3 and 5, with the highest frequency at Grade 4, owing to poverty, incomplete elementary schools (up to Grade 4 only), distance of the school from the house, and migration. About 16 out of 100 of these drop-outs increased their literacy skills from work or other community experience for an equivalent of 2 to 5 grades higher, while the rest (84) retrogressed in their knowledge and skills by an equivalent of two grade levels. Of the three academic subjects tested (Filipino, English and Mathematics), English had the most losers.

The general probability for a drop-out to retrogress is present whatever grade level s/he drops out from; however, the possibility for retrogression is higher if s/he drops out at Grade 3 or below.

In the present study, when drop-outs were asked what literacy skills they have retained, their answers ranged from nothing or about nothing, to writing their names, reading, basic addition and subtraction, counting up to 100, some English words, some school poems and songs, some national heroes, some stories.

Those who said they have forgotten skills they learned in school cite the following reasons: 1) lack of opportunity to use skills learned in school in their daily lives or activities, 2) lack of reading materials and opportunities for writing, 3) lack of access and exposure to media especially print, 4) no opportunity to attend non-formal literacy training because of work, a problem particularly true for married women.

On the other hand, drop-outs who do not revert to illiteracy ascribe their retention of literacy skills to: 1) involvement in community activities where literacy skills are practised and new ones are learned, 2) application of skills learned in school to work and daily activities, and 3) the need to learn new skills because their work and other community activities require these.

6. Use of the inter-agency approach

The community-based approach understood in this way is one of two major factors that will ensure sustainability of our non-formal program even beyond the time frame of the present Philippine Non-Formal Education Project. The other major factor is direct involvement and participation of

community folk, local government and other line agencies present in the communities in the entire process of program planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program.

In a very broad sense their involvement puts real meaning into the concepts of social mobilization, people empowerment and social development.

We define development as a process of human development, a process of social transformation in which man is both the subject and the object, and in which he participates at all levels of decision-making. Self-reliance is both a means and an end in this process. It is a process which starts with the release of creative energy of man, assumes equal access to and a rational use of resources by the poor and vulnerable groups, tends to eliminate the difference between mental and manual labour and uses the full range of technological choices available from other sources properly adapted. This kind of development is not only more humane but also represents a new man, nature, technology mix. In the participatory process which results in growth, human development and equity are not trade-offs. (Ponna Wignaraja, "Towards Praxis and Participatory Development" in *Participatory Development: Learning from South Asia*. Wignaraja et al. Tokyo: UN UP, 1991, p.195).

This definition of development is preferred because: 1) it places man/woman at the center of development; 2) it assumes his/her creative and powerful potential to participate meaningfully in the entire development process; and 3) it recognizes that social change must start with how people themselves respond to the forces which constrain or encourage social transformation.

Empowerment and development cannot be "given to people; it is developed in the course of communal and collective activities in which people organized into associations, cooperatives, barangay and people's organizations decide to work together in a social project which they have helped to plan and continue to sustain.

There is no money in this world that can be found to sustain and indefinitely maintain literacy campaigns or even non-formal literacy programs for each and every adult who drops out of school at an early age. Beyond the life of the present ADB-assisted Non-Formal Project, a continuing literacy and education program must be one which people and local government can manage and sustain for themselves. It must also be one in which local human and other resources are pressed into the service of our literacy functional education program for over-all community development

This means that a real process of collaboration among government organizations, non-government organizations and people's organizations must be started immediately, first through the participation of all these agencies in the process of setting up a community-based non-formal program. In this new mode of setting up education programs, many of us who are used to the processes of formal education will need to rethink our own methods and attitudes, particularly on our thinking that "teachers know best". The acid test of people empowerment is contained in this Chinese proverb:

Go to the people.
Learn from them.
Love them. Help them in their work.
And when their work is done
The best thing that will say about it is:
"We did it all by ourselves."

We have done two pilot programs in Sorsogon and Cotabato to test a process of community cooperation in planning, designing and implementing the non-formal program which can be used as a model for other provinces. The research team reported the enthusiastic participation of community folk and officials alike to start a program made by and for themselves. We educators must learn how to be catalysts for change and then take a back seat afterwards. We can also begin to train para-teachers from the community to help run these programs by themselves. This is a new role for us literacy practitioners.

But a 1995 study by the UP College of Public Administration on the involvement of local government units (LGUs) in the planning and implementation of literacy programs revealed that literacy is a low priority in the development agenda of the LGUs and that many local officials were unaware of existing laws/policies on literacy.

However, all local officials interviewed for the study confirm that they are concerned about the development of their human resources. Because of this, there should be no difficulty in resolving the problems given above.

A first step could be a more thorough information campaign for local officials; another could be the immediate expansion of local school boards to include not only representatives from the formal schools but also those from other line agencies, local NGOs and people's organizations. The Literacy Coordinating Council (LCC) of the Philippines, in response to these findings, has started implementing an intensive advocacy and information dissemination campaign for local officials through the local government leagues.

Implicit in all these is our willingness to recognize that people know best what is good for them, and that organized community efforts are not threats to government but are real steps towards the building of a democratic and civil society.

7. A system of equivalency and accreditation and a new role for the DECS-Bureau of Nonformal Education

We can help make a real beginning for setting up a real school of, by and for the people as a community effort, in which the separation between formal and non-formal education can be obliterated through equivalency, and some common curricular programs. In this situation, education and learning become a continuing and lifelong process involving the whole community as a learning community.

The equivalency system seeks to bridge the separation between the formal and non-formal education streams through a series of equivalency tests identified as follows: Level 1 for the mechanization of basic literacy skills; Level 2 for Grade 4 equivalent; Level 3 for Grade 6 equivalent; and Level 4 for 2nd year high school equivalent.

LCC has commissioned us to develop, standardize and obtain the Philippine norms for the tests of functional literacy commensurate to those levels. These tests are now ready for use and are valuable inputs into the realization of the equivalency system as envisioned by our educational planners.

In all these developments, it is important for us literacy teachers and especially DECS- BNFE personnel to imagine new roles for ourselves.

We shall no longer be direct implementors of programs, for people empowerment demands that the system of continuing and self-sustaining education be planned by people themselves for themselves. Yet, we need not fear that educationists will go out of style because there is a whole new set of tasks for us: to train para-teachers, to assist local executives in planning their development programs where literacy and education are major components, to help design and put in place the system of monitoring and evaluation, and to design and put in place the system of equivalency.

We need not worry about the problem of "turking", for in a collaborative inter-agency effort, each agency will have its own special contribution towards the large effort of designing and promoting literacy and education for all our people.

Thus what we need to develop is a school of the people, *isang paaralan ng sambayanan*, wherein the social organization or community itself becomes

a learning community where literacy and education as well as social participation, mobilization and advocacy for reform are integrated towards the singular and continuing project of enabling people to move from the margins of society to a social space in the mainstream which they have created and helped to transform for themselves.

Part IV. A research-based development model for a community-based literacy and functional education program

The Jomtien Document of UNESCO issued in 1990 and signed by 155 countries launched a worldwide program of Education For All (EFA) in which the principal areas of concern are: 1) early childhood care and development especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children, 2) universal access to and completion of primary education, 3) improvement in learning achievement, 4) reduction of the adult illiteracy rate and 5) expansion of provision of basic education and training in other essential skills for adults and youth.

The Philippines as a signatory to this Document has launched its own country movement in which "eradication of illiteracy", functional education and continuing education are among the central concerns. These have acquired the status of law through Proclamation 480 declaring the period 1990-1999 as the Decade for EFA and Memorandum Circular No. 71 strengthening the resolve to eradicate illiteracy by year 2000.

Nature and magnitude of the literacy problem in the Philippines

A few observations will suffice to indicate the nature and magnitude of our problem on basic education and functional literacy.

First, there is a relatively large gap of 16% between our basic and functional literacy rates, implying that those who learn the rudimentary skills of reading, writing, counting and simple computation are not able to expand these skills to a point where they become functional and integral to their daily activities.

Second, in a comparative international study conducted by Anderson and Bowman (1965), the Philippines was among the few countries registering a negative relation between the basic literacy rate, which is among the highest in the Asia-Pacific Region, and low economic growth as measured by GNP per capita. This finding not only corroborates what we pointed out previously with respect to the gap between our basic and functional literacy rates. It also suggests that the kind of literacy and related skills which we impart through our programs do not necessarily lead to economic development. Put in another way, it suggests that the relationship, for example, between literacy

and the eradication of poverty is not simple and straightforward as is commonly supposed. At the very least, it implies 1) that we need to teach skills beyond basic literacy, 2) that our literacy teaching should be closely tied to poverty alleviation programs, such as livelihood and income-generating activities, and 3) that these activities in order to be sustainable should integrate literacy and education into complete systems of productivity and income generation up to packaging and marketing.

The Alternative Learning System (ALS)

In recognition of these problems, it is very apparent that the present nonformal education program under EFA is determined to put in place a research-based alternative learning system whose principal features as planned radically differ from previous programs.

The most important features of this alternative program are: 1) its attempt to make the program context-specific or community-based, 2) the development of locally-adapted learning materials based on community knowledge and indigenous learning systems, 3) direct involvement and participation of the community folk and local government in the planning, design and implementation of the program, 4) incorporation of a livelihood component in the literacy and education programs, 5) a system of equivalency and accreditation for adults from the non-formal stream, 6) use of the inter-agency approach in the planning, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the program and 7) a social mobilization, advocacy and communication program to develop local and national interest in and support of these programs. All these are contained in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the NFE Project signed between the Philippine Government and the Asian Development Bank.

Under this MOU, three interrelated components are provided; as follows:

The Functional Education and Literacy Program (FELP) will provide direct support to intensive community-based literacy training for illiterate adults and out-of-school youth.). The Continuing Education Program (CEP) will establish a curriculum framework, based on the Essential Learning Competency requirements identified through field research and evaluation and to develop a system of equivalency testing and accreditation for the OSY population up to the secondary level for nationwide implementation. Under the CEP component, the Project will also support the development of prototype self-learning materials and other innovative and cost-efficient delivery systems to provide continuing education support to the graduates of the functional education and literacy program. The Capacity Building Program (CBP) will provide training, staff development and specialist services to

strengthen DECS capacity to plan, coordinate, manage, monitor and evaluate the activities implemented under FELP and CEP, and to enhance the interagency coordinative mechanism required for the effective implementation of those programs. This component will also help to establish an institutional basis for the organization of a Nonformal Education Center, as recommended by the EDCOM.

The FELP component aims to provide illiterate and functionally illiterate adults and OSY from the poorest barangays with basic education and skills training based on a field assessment of actual competencies and learning needs of the beneficiaries. Literacy and livelihood training will be integrated into the learning program as an essential aspect of inculcating self-reliance and self-learning capabilities in the beneficiaries. The Project would identify viable community-development organizations and state universities and colleges (SUCs) as effective grassroots delivery structure for the functional education and literacy programs for the target groups. Direct assistance will be extended to community-based organizations to develop a process that will encourage community identification of issues of concern which can serve as an entry point for functional literacy, and to organize a learning group around that issue. The curricula and learning materials for the FELP will be drawn from existing models, where available, and adapted to meet the literacy level, linguistic, cultural and other contextual requirements of the learning group.

Based on the inter-agency approach, the Project will support subproject implementation at the barangay and municipal levels which will allow formal agreements to be reached between DECS and these agencies on common objectives, strategies and target groups, and allocation of budgetary and staff resources for the implementation of beneficiary training programs. The Project will establish guidelines to DECS Offices regarding the inter-agency coordination process and selection and implementation of FELP subprojects.

In line with these features, the research and development efforts commissioned by the LCC and DECS-BNFE to UP-Education Research Program have sought to develop the databases which will help ensure that these features as planned do not die a natural death on paper but instead become reality on the ground.

Program framework for FELP/CEP/CBP

Figure 1.1 on the following page shows the program framework at the municipal level as envisioned under the RP-ADB MOU utilizing the existing municipal coordinating committees (MCC) originally set up under the EFA (Education for All) program.

The research base (last row of boxes) indicates where the researches commissioned by LCC and DECS-BNFE to UP-ERP are expected to be of use.

Figure 1.1 Program Framework at the Municipal Level

(See hardcopy)